

Environmental Law Institute's Environmental Peacebuilding Program

All too frequently, armed conflict is inextricably entwined with the environment. Natural resources can contribute to conflict, fuel armed conflict, and be targeted by combatants; natural resources can also facilitate post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. Shortages of water and other natural resources can exacerbate existing ethnic and political tensions and may contribute to the causes of war. The burning oil fields of Kuwait and Lebanese oil spills are but some of the vivid images of the environmental consequences of war, which include deliberate, incidental, and accidental effects. Since the 1990s, peacebuilding efforts are increasingly incorporating natural resource management to ensure the transition to a durable peace.

For the past decade, ELI has been a leading source of information on the environmental consequences of war (see: <http://www.eli.org/environmental-peacebuilding/addressing-environmental-consequences-war>).

Maintaining and building peace in fragile post-conflict societies requires consideration of natural resource management. Some conflicts have related directly to — or been fueled by — valuable natural resources such as timber or minerals, as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and other countries. In many instances, old animosities can flare up over control or use of land and other natural resources. Similarly, an inability to deliver key services (water, food, shelter, and other resource-dependent essentials for life) can destabilize fragile societies. Natural resources can also provide an opportunity for confidence-building measures, as with the 1994 peace treaty between Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority. Improved governance of natural resources may provide models for more effective and equitable governance.

Peacebuilding entails a broad variety of initiatives, ranging from negotiation of the peace settlement to post-conflict reconstruction and other measures to facilitate the transition to peace, and the ultimate shift from post-conflict reconstruction to long-term economic and social development. Transitioning to peace can help countries prevent a return to conflict, meet the basic needs for life (water, food, shelter, and livelihoods), decommission armed forces, address underlying causes of tension, and strengthen governance. Experience shows that transparent and sustainable natural resource management can improve each of these peace-building measures. ELI serves as the Secretariat for the Environmental Peacebuilding Association (EnPAx) (see: <https://www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org/>). In this capacity, ELI is essential to organizing the 3rd International Conference on Environmental Peacebuilding (June 19-21 in the Netherlands and Online; registration still open: <https://www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org/conferences/3rd-international-conference/>).

Newsletter: Environmental Peacebuilding Update - a biweekly summary of new publications, events, announcements, jobs, blogs, and news on environmental peacebuilding, published by ELI and UNEP and circulated to more than 4,300 researchers, practitioners, and decisionmakers (262 issues; 2014 – present) See: <http://www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org/news/updates-archives/>

Key Publications:

Toolkit on Monitoring and Evaluation of Environmental Peacebuilding, by Carl Bruch, Amanda Woomeer, et al. (2023) (<https://m-and-e.environmentalpeacebuilding.org/toolkit/>)

Primer on Monitoring and Evaluation of Environmental Peacebuilding, by Carl Bruch, Amanda Woomeer, et al. (2023) (<https://m-and-e.environmentalpeacebuilding.org/toolkit/primer/>)

Deforestación y Derecho: Manual para el abordaje judicial de la deforestación en Colombia, by Carl Bruch, Kristine Perry, et al. (2023) (<https://www.eli.org/research-report/deforestacion-y-derecho>)

The Changing Nature of Conflict, Peacebuilding, and Environmental Cooperation by Carl Bruch, David Jensen, et al. (2019) (<https://law-journals-books.vlex.com/vid/the-changing-nature-of-899530494>)

Series of Environmental Peacebuilding Perspectives (ELI and UNEP, subsequently published by the Environmental Peacebuilding Association)), including:

No. 1: Natural Resources and Conflict: A Glimpse into the Future?, by Michael Ross (2014)

No. 2: From Vicious to Virtuous Circles, by Jon Barnett (2015)

No. 3: Communities and the State: Rethinking the Relationship for a More Progressive Agrarian Century, by Liz Alden Wily (2016)

No. 4: Armed Conflict and Protection of the Environment: Possible or Not?, by Marie Jacobsson (2017)

No. 5: On Being a Trigger for Peace: Using Environmental Cooperation to Alleviate, End, and Hopefully Prevent Armed Conflict, by Ken Conca and Geoff Dabelko (2018)

From Fragility to Resilience: Managing Natural Resources in Fragile States in Africa by Ilona Coyle & Carl Bruch (African Development Bank 2016) (in English and French) (<http://www.eli.org/environmental-peacebuilding/fragility-resilience-managing-natural-resources-fragile-situations-africa>)

Book series on post-conflict peacebuilding and natural resource management published by Routledge (eds. Carl Bruch et al. 2012-2016):

Carl Bruch, Carroll Muffett, & Sandra S. Nichols (eds.), *Governance, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Routledge 2016)

Helen Young & Lisa Goldman (eds.), *Livelihoods, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Routledge 2015)

Erika Weinthal, Jessica Troell, & Mikiyasu Nakayama (eds.), *Water and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Routledge 2014)

Jon Unruh & Rhodri C. Williams (eds.), *Land and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Routledge 2013)

David Jensen & Steve Lonergan (eds.), *Assessment and Restoration of Natural Resources in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Routledge 2012)

Paivi Lujala & Siri Aas Rustad (eds.), *High-Value Natural Resources and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Routledge 2012)